

INDIA

# Regional languages essential to promote full potential of Indians: Amit Shah

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**95% students receive primary education in their mother tongue, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said**

Home Minister Amit Shah said on Friday that promotion of regional languages is essential to unlock the full potential of Indian talent saying 95% receive primary education in their mother tongue. He said law, medicine and engineering should be taught in Indian languages. He said research and development can only be done when one thinks in their own language, and this was one of the reasons that India is lagging in research field.

## Mr. Shah was speaking on second anniversary of the launch of National Education Policy 2020 (NEP).

Education minister Dharmendra Pradhan said NEP 2020 was a counter to the Macaulay education system that was brought by the British to colonise the minds of Indians. He said the Macaulay polices are still in vogue and the NEP will change that.

Mr. Shah said ten States have accepted regional languages as a medium of instruction for engineering courses and several initiatives are being taken to encourage Indian languages in higher education.

Mr. Shah said entrance examinations such as JEE, NEET were organised in 12 Indian languages other than English.

"Ten States have accepted Indian languages such as Hindi, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi and Bengali as medium of instruction for engineering courses. If we don't teach medicine, engineering, and law in Indian languages then we are only using 5% potential of the country.....95% children get primary school education in their mother-tongue," Mr. Shah said.

He pointed out that he knows several good lawyers with excellent grasp on the subject who wait endlessly for cases in district courts as they don't speak fluent English unlike some who practice in the Supreme Court.

Mr. Shah urged the State government officials to implement NEP on the ground. NEP provides a framework for the education sector but is not binding on the States. "NEP cannot succeed without the cooperation from States. Centre and States are a team, if the team doesn't work together then the NEP cannot be implemented on the ground. Many States have finalised the policy, I keep enquiring about this from non- BJP States also," Mr. Shah said. He claimed that NEP has not been opposed by any quarter.

Tamil Nadu has opposed the policy. The State submitted an affidavit in the Madras High Court in June that it will be "cruel and disadvantageous to the people of Tamil Nadu" to implement the NEP since the State has already achieved a Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 51.4% as against the target of 50% proposed to be achieved through the new policy by 2035.

Mr. Shah said the dropout ratio in primary education has reduced from 4.2% to 1.3%.

He said by 2030, the aim is to open a multi-disciplinary higher education institute in every district. To help India become a global study destination, multi-disciplinary education and research university (MERU) will be established.

"The NEP took shape on the basis of over 2 lakh concrete suggestions received from various quarters," Mr. Shah said.

He said language is only a medium of expression, it cannot be used to judge a person's capability and abilities.

"Learning by rote can get you marks, good job and even a comfortable retired life, but if you have to achieve great heights then you need to think in your own language. The NEP focuses not only on education but character building also. A nation is made by its people, not by bricks and mortars or industries alone," he said.

He said though the new policy was rooted in Indian culture but its outlook was global. "There was a time when travelling was difficult but even then students from all over the world came to study at universities such as Takshshila and Nalanda. We should aim to bring students from other parts of the world to India," the ministry said.

He said that the aim was to impart financial education to 50% students by 2030 so that they are ready to face the challenges in future.

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